DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 288 223 CS 505 801

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TITLE Political Debates and Their Application to the Teaching of Lincoln-Douglas Debate.
PUB DATE 8 Nov 87
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (73rd, Boston, MA, November 5-8, 1987).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Class Activities; *Content Analysis; *Curriculum Guides; *Debate; *Instructional Materials; Learning Activities; Persuasive Discourse; Presidential Campaigns (United States); Speech Communication; Teaching Guides; Teaching Methods; *Values; Values Education
IDENTIFIERS Lincoln Douglas Debate Style; Presidential Debates

ABSTRACT

Designed for teachers of the Lincoln-Douglas style debate, this curriculum guide outlines an approach to teaching analysis in debate, and suggests practical activities employing contemporary political debates as an instructional device. The guide first presents a framework for values analysis, including such aspects as (1) identifying the nature and hierarchies of values; (2) the effect of values on decision making; (3) the values inherent within a given topic; (4) the conflict between opposing values in a debate; and (5) the relationship of values to policies and facts. The guide then discusses contemporary debates between presidential candidates as values debates, noting the similarity between the values based Lincoln-Douglas debates and the values arguments of the Reagan-Mondale debates. The last section of the guide describes activities for studying political debates using transcripts of presidential and vice-presidential debates from "The New York Times," the television talk show "Firing Line," and other sources. This section divides the activities according to the teaching of value analysis, topic analysis, and argument analysis. Included is a bibliography of 13 sources for information on Lincoln-Douglas and other political debates. (JG)

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Political Debates and Their Application to the Teaching of Lincoln-Douglas Debate

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A paper presented to the Speech Communication Association
Annual Meeting, Boston, Massachusetts
November 8, 1987

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Given that one of the newest forensic events, Lincoln-Douglas debate, was named for two politicians who engaged in a series of debates, it seems appropriate to suggest that modern-day political debates have potential as a teaching/learning tool for values debate. The Lincoln-Douglas Illinois Senate debates in 1858 were excellent examples of the complexity of values and their impact on public policy. A study of those debates, alone, will give students an appreciation for the rich heritage of the forensic activity as well as insights into debating modern Lincoln-Douglas topics.[1]

This paper is designed to be a curriculum guide for using political debates in the Lincoln-Douglas classroom. As such, it stresses pedagogy over theory. However, it does provide a brief theoretical basis for using the activities suggested. Specifically, the paper outlines an approach to teaching analysis in Lincoln-Douglas debate, and suggests practical activities employing political debates as an instructional device.

A Framework for Lincoln-Douglas Analysis

Since Lincoln-Douglas debate incorporates propositions of value, it is important for debaters to understand the nature and types of values and their relationship to facts and policies. In a paper prepared for the 1983 Central States Speech Association convention, I suggested that values analysis be taught on three levels: (1) the nature of values and their effect on decision making; (2) the values inherent within a given topic; and (3) the conflict between opposing values presented in a debate.[2]

The first analysis level is designed to familiarize debaters with values language. At this level, coaches should introduce the works of Milton Rokeach[3] as well as those of argumentation theorists.[4] Debaters should become acquainted with the common classifications of values as moral, aesthetic, pragmatic, and political. They should also be aware of research such as that by Steele and Redding which identifies typical American values as puritan and pioneer morality, the value of the individual, achievement and success, change and progress, ethical equality, equality of opportunity, effort and optimism, efficiency, practicality and pragmatism, rejection of authority, scientific and secular rationality, sociality, material comfort, quantification, external comfort, humor , generosity and consideration, and patriotism.[5]

In addition, Lincoln-Douglas debaters should understand three characteristics of values argument. First, is that values are arranged in hierarchies. Values are prioritized because they often cannot be achieved equally and simultaneously. Also, some values are subordinate to others in the sense that the subordinate values help to achieve a higher or core value. Second, the heart of clash in values debate is disagreement over the arrangement of values hierarchies. And, finally, hierarchies are often based on the policies they produce.

In essence, the first level of analysis should introduce a framework for topic analysis that includes identification of values hierarchies, value conflicts, and the relationship of values to policies and facts.

The second level of analysis is topic analysis. Some topics

clearly state the values conflict in the debate. An example is "Liberty is preferable to life." Others are worded more as policy topics or incorporate policy statements such as "Resolved: That the protection of public safety justifies random, mandatory drug testing throughout society." With clear values topics, debaters should not stop analysis with those listed in the topic. Subordinate or related values should also be explored. When debating a topic that appears to be more policy oriented, debaters should determine the values that produce the policies.

There are two ways to identify values inherent in Lincoln-Douglas topics of either variety. The first is through brainstorming, and the second is by identifying values terms used in sources that are researched. Debaters should generate lists, identify hierarchies suitable for cases on each, and design a rationale to support the hierarchy.

Once a debate has begun, the third level of values analysis -- argument analysis-- takes place. Values positions should be identified clearly in terms of hierarchies and should be compared and contrasted. Rationale statements should suggest why one set of values should take precedence over another. It is at this point that factual evidence, policy implications, and even plans become a means of illustrating the effects of preferring one set of values over another. If a debater does not clarify what values are supported, cross-examination should be used to identify the values.

At the argumentation stage, it is possible that both debaters may be defending the same core value; however, the conflict lies in the ordering of subordinate values. This is especially true when

policy-oriented topics are debated. The policies identified in the topic may represent the differing subordinate values. Thus, topics which appear to be purely policy statements can be examined within a values framework if debaters first state the values represented by the topic, why those values are important, and how a particular policy either preserves or jeopardizes a value.

Political Debates as Value Debates

Anyone who has watched or read about the 1988 primary debates among both Democrat and Republican candidates is aware that values and value terms predominate the discussions. William Buckley's two "Firing Line" specials had both sets of candidates discussing the need to return to or to preserve American values or the values of the candidates' parties. A quick perusal of transcripts of any political debate, beginning with the Lincoln-Douglas debates on states rights versus abolition of slavery, indicates that values are the basis for the policies politicians support.

Excerpts from the 1984 debates between President Reagan and Walter Mondale illustrate. Reagan ended his closing statement with these words: "I think we've given the American people back their spirit. I think there is an optimism in the land and a patriotism and I think that we're in a position once again to heed the words of Thomas Paine who said: 'We have it in our power to begin the world over again.'"[6]

Mondale's closing also contained values terms: "Are we better off when we de-emphasize our values in human rights? . . . . Can we be -- say, really say, that we will be better off when we pull away from sort of that basic American instinct of decency and fairness?"[7]

Since values arguments are such an important part of political debates, analysis of those debates can give debaters a "real world" view of how values affect our lives and our policies. Political debates are excellent models for study not only because they are rich in values language and arguments, but also because most are two-person debates. Primary debates are conducted more as forums or group discussions than real debates, but even those exchanges of ideas provide insights into value debate.

As indicated in the previous section, many Lincoln-Douglas topics have policy terms or suggest policies. By studying political debates, students can better understand the relationship among values, facts, and policies. If there is a weakness in debates involving such topics, it is that values get lost in discussion of such things as drug testing. Political debaters are asked more policy questions than value questions; however, answers to those questions contain frequent references to values. In analyzing such responses, debaters can come to understand how they can incorporate values analysis into policy discussions.

One of the common criticisms of academic debate is that it strays from the real world in terms of presentational style and in the types of analysis and arguments presented. Lincoln-Douglas debate was introduced as a means of reducing debate jargon, speed, and squirrel cases. In many ways, it has succeeded in doing so. At times, however, debates do sound as if they are policy debates short on evidence and jargon. By using political debates as a teaching device, debaters may be better able to understand how to argue values.

Activities for Studying Political Debates

The activities described below are based on the use of either transcripts of debates or video tapes. Transcripts of presidential and vice-presidential debates are available from several sources. *The New York Times* has transcripts of the debates which were carried the day after each was held. Several books also include transcripts of past presidential debates.* Transcripts of the "Firing Line" Republican and Democratic candidate debates held in 1987 can be obtained for $5 each from Firing Line, P. O. Box 5966, Columbia, S. C. 29250. Local television stations have tapes of many local and state candidate debates. With the record number of televised debates scheduled for both the primary and general elections in 1988, it should be easy to videotape many debates.

Activities for Teaching Value Analysis

1. Give students a debate transcript or have them watch a televised political debate. Have them identify the values terms used in the debate. Compile lists from each student and make a master lists of the values terms used in the debate.

2. Divide the value list according to whether the values are moral, aesthetic, political, or pragmatic. Identify the values cited by Steele and Redding as common American values.

3. Using the value lists, determine if there are values commonly identified as Democratic or Republican party values.

4. Using the value lists, have students identify the policies that are associated with the values.

5. Have students identify value hierarchies for each debater.

6. Have students identify value conflicts between debaters.

How do facts and policies relate to the value differences?

Activities for Teaching Topic Analysis

1. Have students select an issue and identify the rationale states used by each candidate to support the value.

2. Have students select an issue from the debate (e.g. taxes, environment, arms control) and prepare their own rationale statements on the issue for the value(s) supported by each candidate.

3. Prepare a Lincoln-Douglas topic that relates to one of the issues discussed in the candidate debate. Have students identify the values underlying the issue and prepare rationale statements supporting the value hierarchy. Have students present the rationale statements as short speeches.

Activities for Teaching Argument Analysis

1. Examine an issue on which there is significant clash between the candidates. Have students determine if the basis for clash comes from (a) supporting a different core value, (b) supporting a different set of subordinate values but the same core value, (c) supporting different policies that evolve from the values.

2. Have students analyze arguments in the debate according to the policies supported, the underlying value, and the factual evidence supplied to support the position. Discuss differences in each candidate's arguments.

3. Prepare a Lincoln-Douglas topic or a set of topics based on issues raised in the debate. Have students debate the topic.

Additional Sources for Information on Lincoln-Douglas or on Political Debates

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Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1979.

1. *See* Saul Sigelschiffer, *The American Conscience: The Drama of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates* (New York: Horizon Press, 1973).

2. *See* Diana B. Prentice, "Analysis in Lincoln-Douglas Debate," a paper presented to the Central States Speech Association, Lincoln, Nebraska, April 9, 1983, 3-4.

3. *See* Milton Rokeach, *The Nature of Values* (New York: The Free Press, 1973).

4. *See* J. W. Patterson and David Zarefsky, *Contemporary Debate* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1983); Richard Rieke and Malcolm O. Sillars, *Argumentation and the Decision Making Process* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1975); George W. Ziegelmueller and Charles A. Dause, *Argumentation: Inquiry and Advocacy* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975); Douglas Ehninger and Wayne Brockriede, *Decision by Debate, 2nd. edition* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978); and Michael Pfau, David A. Thomas, and Walter Ulrich, *Debate and Argument: A Systems Approach to Advocacy* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1987).

5. Edward D. Steele and W. Charles Redding, "The American Value System: Premises for Persausion," *Western Speech Journal*, 26 (1962), 85-90.

6. Keith Blume, *The Presidential Election Show: Campaign '84 and*

Beyond the Nightly News (South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc., 1985), 272.

7. Blume, pp. 272-73.

8. *See* Blume, pp. 243-332 for transcripts of the two Reagan-Mondale debates and the Bush-Ferraro debate; Sidney Kraus, ed. *The Great Debates (Kennedy vs. Nixon, 1960)* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1962); and Sidney Kraus, ed. *The Great Debates (Carter vs. Ford, 1976)* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana Univeristy Press, 1976).